

MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY
MARINE AIR-GROUND TRAINING AND EDUCATION CENTER
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5050

SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
MILITARY ISSUES RESEARCH PROJECT

BY

R. S. COHEN
LTCOL USMC

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 2008		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2008 to 00-00-2008	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE CSC Curriculum That Meets the Needs of the FMF				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street, Marine Corps Control Development Command, Quantico, VA, 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 19	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: CSC CURRICULUM THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF THE FMF

- I. Theme: That the CSC curriculum needs to equate to the level of responsibility (in a warfighting sense) the graduates will be tasked to perform in the FMF and joint environment.
- II. Thesis: That the CSC curriculum be focused at the tactical level of operations. Current HQMC assignment policy and needs of the FMF require this school to be a "tactical qualifier".
- III. Discussion: Students need to be able to comfortably transition out of the concept stage to organizing and leading a fighter staff towards mission accomplishment. The mechanics and procedures of staff functioning and interaction are just as critical as the Big Blue arrows. Ability to apply these skills tends to put reality in planning. Since 72% of the graduates are being assigned to the FMF/Joint Duty it would lead one to conclude the curriculum should focus on preparing them for their role as a field grade officer in these environments.
- IV. Summary: Majors need to be competent in a MAGTF (MEF level) environment before they can analyze the other aspects of warfare. In addition they must possess the leadership and management skills commensurate with their level of responsibility. These skills need to be continually taught as part of our professional development. Knowledge without the ability to implement in a positive vein leads to a mediocre or substandard product.
- V. Conclusions: That CSC curriculum be comprised of three semesters. First semester be titled Strategy and Policy (to include Theory and Nature through Op Art) and draw 20% of the curriculum. Prior to the second semester a interim (time TBD) package be devoted to Leadership, Management and Decision Making Skills. The new HQMC total quality leadership package could be the nucleus of this course. The second semester focus on Doctrine and Fighting the MAGTF, and the third semester on Fighting the MAGTF in a Joint/Combined Environment. To do this effectively case studies and wargaming (of some type) would serve as the vehicle to promote learning.

INTRODUCTION

"Operational competence can rarely overcome the tactical inability to perform, just as strategic incompetence can squander what operational success has aimed."¹

FMFM 1

Recent observation in SWA of our Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) staff skill level in operating a two Division MAGTF exemplified the need that institutionally we need a better system to prepare our senior level officers for war. The two categories that surfaced were operating at the tactical level and exhibiting the leadership/management traits to create the most productive environment feasible. The age old problem of on-the-job (OJT) training to become proficient or assuming there will be enough knowledgeable folks in the area to develop a solid plan has to end. The responsibility to ask the right questions when critiquing a proposed course of action or operations order, lead and manage a staff, while team building, must rest on the shoulders of our commanders and key staff officers (at all levels).

The necessity through our educational system, of developing a solid tactical and leadership/management foundation in our future leaders is critical for success within the USMC and in the joint environment. These two traits go hand and glove, for having the knowledge is mandatory but without possessing the skill to implement through the people with you - efficiency is degraded. These abilities become even more critical in the joint

environment. The requirement to articulate USMC capabilities and needs, while understanding how we interact with the other services is essential to battlefield success and the future roles/missions of the USMC. There is no doubt in either the politicians or military leaders mind that all future battlefields will have joint forces in theater.

It becomes obvious (even to the layman) when analyzing the development pattern of our senior leadership and functioning of our higher level tactical staffs that there are institutional as well as educational improvements that need to be addressed. As a philosophical note--it's time for us to get beyond the feeling a superior work ethic and the tremendous accomplishments of our young Marines will resolve all our shortfalls. We historically identify the problems in after action reports, but (in most cases) the action to aggressively resolve for a long term fix is not there. The MAGTF master plan is a prime example. Promoted as the document to focus mission requirements, modify force structure and lead us through the next twenty years--had no significant impact. The result was we were back to business as usual in I MEF two months after it was published.

The issues of career patterns, command selection, personnel stability, unit training programs, redundancy of staffs, lack of and changing doctrine--that is linked to research/development and procurement, and our education system all have an impact on the environment we provide to develop our future commanders and staff. This list is by no means all inclusive--point being that education is but one piece of the pie, but in my opinion (other

than combat experience) the most critical. For if we don't provide the right level of knowledge for the right people, at the right time, then we diminish our capability to resolve the numerous challenges that effect the future growth of our leaders and the organization.

The theme of this paper is to justify why the focus of the Command and Staff College (CSC) curriculum should be on "How to" operate at the tactical level of war and develop the leadership and management skills that will enable you to succeed. What we have to come to grips with is do we gear an intermediate level school (ILS) towards the next assignment or view it as a school that supposed to prepare you for assignment requirements 6-8 years out. To conduct a study on how much information a graduate retained 6 years from now would be interesting. I'll argue in a generic sense we can do both (realizing the school can't be all things to all people) but the learning objectives must be geared for the level of responsibility a Major will normally operate within. Meaning he'll most likely influence the decision making process at the tactical level. This is not meant to demean the thinking skills developed through working at operational level and above, but put them in perspective relative to time spent in each area. Bottom line-concepts are great but you need to learn some procedures and doctrine.

The justification for this focus will be substantiated through reviewing HQMC current assignment policy to and from school, the tactical level of ability of our officer corps (my

perception), and surveys from recent graduates. Institutional problems will not be discussed in any length as part of this issue paper.

The scope of this paper will take into consideration the military education policy document (MEPD) and the Skelton Report, from the Panel on Military Education. Understanding the theme of ILS (according to the Skelton Report), should be at the operational level with an introduction to military strategy and the principal school for learning jointness.² Given that foundation with no specific guidance on percentage of time spent in each area, curriculum objectives could be developed that satisfy this requirement while teaching doctrine and the How Tos to execute. It appears though the Skelton panel doesn't appreciate that the mission focus for a Marine major is tactics oriented. This would have given them more of an understanding of subject matter balance. The Skelton Report was right on the mark though when it emphasized the need for officers to become proficient in their own service prior to transitioning to a joint education. I wonder if they comprehend the amount of time required to meet this goal. The second key point, at the ILS level, is the responsibility for teaching staff skills, processes and procedures, lie in Phase I joint training. Again, another costly (but required evolution in time. This would enable though Armed Forces Staff College to focus in on case studies on the combat employment of forces. This same theme holds true for MAGTF training. Without a doctrinal base and the knowledge to operate a MAGTF staff the transition

from conceptual employment becomes difficult. This became evident in observing the CSC students during their CAPSTONE wargame. What educational curriculum critics have trouble grasping is that there are various levels of warfare (i.e., low, mid and high intensity) within the tactical level that military leaders have to be competent in before they make decisions that affect lives. Bottom line - majors going to a joint assignment or the FMF need the educational foundation to fight forces at those levels. CSC graduates will be sent to key billets in the FMF as their schooling is considered an advantage over contemporaries.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Three significant themes are being pushed by MMOA. One, that 70% of the majors at CSC be assigned to the FMF. This guidance (at 60%) was initiated by General Barrow in 1981, based on the fact that from 1977-1981 less than 50% of the graduates of CSC went to FMF. General Gray has since modified it to 70%. The monitor's hands are not tied to this percentage, given that quality is the key, but they work towards this goal. Their guidance is to look for future leaders in the corps through picking the best qualified/most competitive records. Whether official or unofficial we've initiated a command track for a select group of officers who will serve as a reservoir of knowledge in their next assignment. On the average 20% of the majors in the USMC will attend CSC. The 1991 class will send 57% of the graduates to the FMF. Point being we're selecting our best and the guidance is get them to the fighting forces to stimulate the "way" it should be done at the operator level.

Second theme is junior and mid level majors are the priority for attendance at CSC. Guidance was published in a MMOA memorandum of 26 August 1990 that those officers with a date of rank of 1 May 1988 are too senior to go to CSC. Rationale here is that the monitors view the CSC curriculum as a vehicle to prepare the graduates for an FMF major's billet (i.e., Bn/Regt/Div). As a side note, school for advanced warfare (SAW) is viewed more in the vein as a preparatory phase for the MEF or MAGTF level. Ideally CSC should be focused at Division/MEF and SAW for a joint assignment. Going to school has to be more than just an "atta-boy" for a job well done but lead to a career progression of knowledge as you move up in responsibility.

Third theme is the priority on joint assignments. Present guidance is joint staff assignments whether in an operational or administrative billet will be filled at 100%. This would lead one to conclude (as the Skelton Report emphasized) that joint education is growing in importance. As Skelton pointed out all too often the service schools and war colleges pay lip service to actually teaching a baseline of knowledge required to fight all forces in a joint environment. CSC class of 1991 is sending 15% of the students to joint assignments. Given the qualifier that one must be competent in their own service skills prior to satisfying joint operational needs, would justify schools dedicating additional curriculum time to do it right. The follow-on school to assist CSC graduates in preparing for a joint assignment is a 12 week course at Armed Forces Staff College. No other formal follow-on

schools are programmed for graduates prior to their next assignment. The artillery community identifying the need for additional training at the tactical level has initiated an informal course at Fort Sill for all officers returning to the FMF. Lacking any other follow on combat arms schools and given the changing dynamics of the battlefield-CSC has to be viewed as a tactical qualifier for assignment to the FMF or Joint duty.

The credibility impact of a field grade officer returning to the fleet for probably his last time - will effect performance and ultimately promotion.

STUDENT SURVEYS

I observed two Battalion Operation Officers who were recent graduates of CSC, that had to deal with the credibility gap for about a year. Regaining the confidence of the Company Commanders was not easy, especially when the Assistant Operations Officer, an AWS graduate was sharper tactically. The theme of my comments back to a CSC survey was to educate our field grade officers on how to function tactically at the division level along with the ability to write and orchestrate a comprehensive order through planning and execution. Any officer returning to the FMF must understand the basics of combat operations center functioning and linkage between the division, wing and FSSG. This knowledge is essential for a major who is normally at the action officer (AO) level making things happen.

Other comments from commanders stressed the need for more practical application of developing warfighting skills and writing orders. Possess the ability to articulate doctrine and understand the relationship among staff sections. One commander keyed on personal development skills "to stand up in a alien environment and clearly present and defend their position in a controversial area".³ The message is clear throughout all the commander evaluations - good school but need more focus at the tactical level. Another significant point that surfaced was only 23% of the evaluators noted better leadership skills in their CSC graduate vice contemporary non-grads. In the area of management only 41% marked a positive difference. While the Skelton panel feels these areas are a secondary priority, I'll argue this is just as much of a necessity to achieve the end product. Unfortunately, in SWA, I periodically observed EGOs that were used to shelter a lack of knowledge or leadership skills. This situation doesn't enhance productivity of a staff.

The students sent a clear message - course was headed in the right direction but needed more depth in the mechanics of fighting forces. Biggest change being reduce the time spent on historical case studies analyzing the strategic and operational level of war. Focus more on the tactical level through practical application. Understanding the mechanics of transitioning out of big blue arrow concepts into supportable operation orders and being able to guide a staff through these procedures requires hands on time to learn. An additional but relevant point of view

from the non FMF bound student was good course, but minimal application given next assignment. This leads one to question, given the number of students (28% from 1991 class) not returning to the fleet our obligation in a generic sense to prepare them. A separate semester or elective program addressing those leadership and management skills to operate on a HQMC staff, recruiting environment or independent duty would be invaluable. Naval War College's Defense Economics and Decision-Making Course is an example of a broad scope package that addresses these skills.

TACTICAL ABILITY OF OUR OFFICER CORPS

As General Steele, IG of the USMC prior to his retirement, stated to me in Okinawa, "Our senior officers (as a group) are the weakest tacticians in our officer ranks." This was not meant in a derogatory vein, but that the system to educate them as a "gun fighter" was not in place. He filled the age old void of a commander's course by creating his own at 2nd Division for Battalion and Regimental Commanders. As CG, he taught this package. This course was programmed at the tactical level and covered leadership requirements in operating a combat unit. Unfortunately his actions were not followed in the other divisions. Bothers me that we haven't provided an education continuum for our future commanders. My exposure at the MEF and division level reinforced what I had already expected-field grade and general officers out of their comfort zone when talking tactics and leading a fighter staff. In every major exercise

(except for one) I participated in the staffs developed (in every sense) a finished product for signature by the chain of command. What was even more disheartening that operational briefings were conducted without being challenged in any vein. It appeared the theme was as long as everybody is happy the concept is OK and lets not expose a key billet holders lack of knowledge. This mindset never forced action officers to really think through concepts. As a result, low levels of acceptance equated to mediocre levels of performance. Personal pride can only carry you so far. GALLANT KNIGHT (a CINC level CPX) was the prime example as joint and unilateral concept development did not involve senior officer approval. Key billet holders spent most of their time focusing on the "in-box mentality" administrative requirements, as they perceived this as more of measuring stick for evaluation by superiors in a peacetime environment. In addition it took virtually six months of preparation for regiments through MEF to develop their SOPs and fighter staff capabilities. Even though a lack of personnel stability contributed to this situation, the majority of the folks involved in this process were ILS/TLS graduates. I realize there are other contributing factors but the message is clear, our ILS/TLS curriculums need to spend more time at the tactical level.

The mechanics of internal staff functioning is a lost art that needs to be taught at all levels. In some cases the ILS/TLS graduates assumed their job description (given their previous level of schooling) was still up in the conceptual sky and had to

be brought down to earth to gain an appreciation for what it really takes to plan and execute. Bottom line - big picture guys fall by the wayside in the FMF at the rank of Major, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel.

This mentality carried over to SWA during the Mideast conflict. My first impression was one of an exercise mentality (MEF level) in attempting to satisfy mission required tasks. The transition did occur but the time and effort involved are difficult to put in words. The learning curve in staff coordination, COC structure and functioning, concept development and information flow are a few of the key areas the MEF grew significantly. To walk into a MEF COC two weeks prior to the start of a war and see no ground ops officer or 1 to 50,000 map with friendly positions is hard to comprehend. This is only one example, but indicative that something is lacking somewhere in getting our fighters ready for war. Important to note again the majority of billet holders were ILS graduates. Sensitivity here is we may not have two months to prepare for our next war.

I can appreciate the difficulties of developing an ad hoc staff (as the MEF evolved) but what I observed in many cases was a lack of know how in bringing the team together. The absence of SOPs compounded this problem and the management techniques employed to operate a 1,000 man organization went through a rough growing process. What it made me realize is that as we move up in rank leadership, management and decision making abilities are not a

given. They must continue to be developed by unit commanders and schools commensurate with the level of responsibility one assumes.

My final observation on tactical competence was at the CSC CAPSTONE wargame. I focused on the MEF and JTF staff to determine if the foundation had been laid in the curriculum to operate at these levels. My analysis after observing concept development, staff coordination, briefings, information flow, op orders/frag order development, and functional area responsibilities was that the students needed more curriculum time in all these areas. Their "Where Do I Start" questions in dividing up the Battlefield (i.e., close, deep, rear) and how do you coordinate the MAGTF to satisfy concept requirements must be taught. Tremendous progress was made throughout the week and the exercise was beneficial but we owe them a better sense of how its supposed to be done. To acquire a joint learning experience in an operational mode other ILS schools need to participate in our wargaming environment so the issues/procedures can be worked out.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Five out of the six current objectives for CSC could easily be applicable at any top level school. To think strategically, understand theory of war, analyze strategic guidance, assess relationships between the operational and tactical level as they apply to strategic goals, and critically analyze war are important to understand the spectrum of conflict but don't rate three plus

months of CSC curriculum time. Only one of the six objectives (plan and execute at the MAGTF level) begins to target the "hard" skills of learning how to operate a MAGTF (MEF) within the joint/combined environment.

As a final example, being involved in the development of the amphibious concept of operations in SWA-once again opened my eyes to the level of knowledge required (by a field grade officer) to persuade commanders and staffs to execute. The gut level USN/USMC debates were not over whether we were going to execute a landing (that decision rested with component commanders and the CINC) but "how" we were going to conduct the landing. If you couldn't articulate the linkage between planning and deconflicting fire support, control measures, command and control, airspace management, intell collection and flow of information, link-up operations and a CSS concept you might as well stayed home. Credibility was gained or lost instantly and these discussions were conducted by LtCols and Colonels. The role of the Major on the staff was one of coordinating the decisions made. Bottom line - Majors never even had the on-scene opportunity to influence the decision making. This does not negate though their ability to persuade the boss prior to his attendance. Amazing how the "reality of conflict" makes us realize the role we play and where we contribute.

Realizing 72% of the CSC graduates are going to the FMF or a joint assignment, the need to gain additional time in the curriculum to enhance their tactical and joint warfighting

knowledge beyond the conceptual level appears justified. Approximately 40% of the curriculum is presently devoted to the operational through strategic level of war. Ideally we could combine these courses (in one semester) as the Naval War College does in their strategy and policy package and reduce the course length to approximately 20% of the curriculum. This would satisfy the Skelton Panel requirement of an "Introduction to Military Strategy" and enable CSC to develop two other semesters of warfighting combined with leadership/management development. The second semester would be focused on learning the appropriate doctrine and commander/staff responsibilities of how to fight the MAGTF (focus MEF level). The third semester would be geared towards fighting the MAGTF in a joint/combined environment employing various wargames to shift billets (i.e., FSSG, ACE, GCE, CE) and scenarios. This would provide a baseline of tactical competency in understanding all aspects of a MAGTF.

The Problem Director for each semester would be tasked to develop case studies on leadership and management styles for evaluation by the students. Prior to initiating the second semester, a separate package would be incorporated on leadership, managing people/assets and decision making at the field grade officer level. The current program of "Total Quality Leadership" (Demings method) adopted by the USMC/USN could serve as the nucleus of this package. The USMC trademark has always been leadership and the ability to manage large organizations. These traits must be developed as we progress in the chain of command.

The draft MCO on PME states "ILS focuses on the tactical employment of larger units at the operational level of war and is the principle level to learn jointness."⁴ Problem here is when you dedicate a good portion of your time at the operational level the concern or perceived need to transition down to the mechanics of fighting the force loses its importance. The assignments CSC graduates are going to will require that knowledge.

We have to be careful not to let the politicians drive our educational objectives. The competing requirements for joint accreditation and a masters program should not be the overriding factors in shaping a curriculum. The warfighting requirements that a Marine Major must possess upon returning to the Fleet should supercede all other competing programs.

As FMFM 1 states, "A leaders career, from the initial stages of leadership training, should be viewed as a continuous, progressive process of development. At each stage of his career, he should be preparing for the subsequent stage."⁵

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ FMFM 1, Warfighting, HQMC, Washington, DC. 1989.
- ² Skelton, Ike (Panel on Military Education), Report from the Panel on Military Education, Washington, DC. 1989.
- ³ Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Curriculum Validation/Task Analysis. Colonel L. R. Zinzer, Commanding Officer, Marine Security Forces, East, Norfolk, VA. 1991.
- ⁴ Draft MCO P1510.27C (Professional Military Education). Marine Corps University. 26 Mar 91.
- ⁵ FMFM 1, Warfighting, HQMC, Washington, DC. 1989.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Command and Staff College, Standard Operating Procedures. Draft 8 Feb 1991.
- Defranco, Maj, USMC, MMOA, Personal Interview conducted on 16 May 1991.
- General Accounting Office, Air Force, Status of Recommendations on Officers' Professional Military Education, Washington, 1991.
- General Accounting Office, Marine Corps, Status of Recommendations on Officers' Professional Military Education, Washington, 1991.
- Hoffman, Col, USMC, HQMC, Telephone Interview on Total Quality Leadership Program conducted on 14 May 1991.
- Marine Corps Command and Staff College Curriculum Validation/ Task Analysis, Student Surveys from Class of 1990.
- Marine Corps Command and Staff College Curriculum Validation/ Task Analysis, Questionnaire for Reporting Seniors of Class of 1990.
- Marsh, LtCol, USMC, MMOA, Personal Interview conducted on 16 May 1991.
- Military Education Policy Document, CM 344-90, Office of the Chairman of the JCS, Washington, DC, 1 May 90.
- Skelton, Ike (panel on Military Education), Report from the Panel on Military Education, Washington, 1989.
- Walton, Mary, The Deming Management Method. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986.